What is Dark Gallifrey?

Let me enLighten you.

TIM FOLEY
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My DARK GALLIFREY: MORBIUS story has been announced!

And there's a tweet from the official Doctor Who account celebrating its announcement:

I have been sitting on this story for years now (I first started writing it in 2021). It is a battleship that has been oh so slowly getting ready to sail. I am so so so so excited to

be sharing it with you soon.

But....um... what actually is DARK GALLIFREY?

Genesis of a Tyrant

I recently subbed a stack with a few random images on it. This was one of them:

It's "The Sea of Ice" by Caspar David Friedrich. He's one of my favourite painters, with his detailed landscapes dripping in atmosphere. He often captures vast expanses which become the setting for great gothic narratives in my mind.

Typically, when you pitch for a story for Big Finish, you write a little paragraph.

For DARK GALLIFREY: MORBIUS, I submitted that image instead.

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Hopefully this starts to give you some idea about how different this range is going to be. It's an experimental series that puts the writer centre-stage. We've each been given a Time Lord villain… a runtime of three hours… a few other nudges and characters (connective tissue between the tales, if you like)… and then we've been let off the leash. *Not just in terms of content, but in terms of form as well.*

I like to think of it as the Villains' Trilogy of 2003 shot through a kaleidoscope.

I was given Morbius, a relatively unknown figure, from the very early days of Gallifrey's history. So how was I going to tell his story?

The form I settled on was a gothic novel. The story which originally featured Morbius, 1976's THE BRAIN OF MORBIUS, was famously inspired by FRANKENSTEIN after all. Returning to Mary Shelley's original tale, I thought about that framing device with Captain Walton exploring the North Pole… and it made me think of creepy nautical stories, classics like MOBY DICK and amazing modern versions like Dan Simmons' THE TERROR. I thought as well about "sensation novels" which dripped with gothic trappings. These were tales of melodrama with cliffhanger endings to their chapters, ideal for serialisation…

From the 1994 film 'Mary Shelley's Frankenstein'

The form dictates the content. So this is a story told in eight chapters, full of twists and turns and an ugliness at its heart. I want you to smell the leathery tomes as you listen. I want to trap you in these Friedrich-esque realms.

And look, if this isn't your vibe, fear not - because every DARK GALLIFREY has taken a radically different approach. Yes, *everything* is up for grabs - tone, episode lengths, number of stories, POVs, types of audio… There are some truly bonkers stories coming up with your favourite villains and favourite writers. Get excited.

But what's the story about?

We're early in Gallifrey's history. It remains a time of myth and legend, with the Time Lords fresh out of their first civil war. But it's good news guys, that mean old Morbius has been defeated! He certainly won't be troubling us any more! Our last battleship just needs to get safely home. Yeah, I'm sure NOTHING will go wrong on our final voyage…

(That's not the official blurb.)

It's a period of Gallifrey we rarely see on screen. Not quite the Dark Times, but still very much in their shadow. There will be lore, machinations, tales of ancient heroes. And we are laser-focussed on Morbius (played by the astounding Sam West again): his life, his fight, his death. Yes, we do begin with the great tyrant already executed. But come on, Morbius rarely lets his own death get in the way of a good story…

This is one story told over three hours. First disc is Chapters 01 to 03, second disc is Chapters 04 to 06, and the third disc is Chapters 07 & 08. Just to be clear, **no disc will make sense in isolation.** It'd be like buying only one volume of the original two-tomed FRANKENSTEIN. Or the second VHS of THE WEB PLANET (Episodes 4-6). Apologies on that front, it was written as a box-set. But this way you get three shiny covers and an deliciously agonizing wait between cliffhangers.

Perhaps you might listen to a chapter a week, or you could save all the discs to binge in one go. However you listen to it, I promise you - *you will have an absolute blast*. It's one of my favourite things I've ever written, and the performances take it to a whole new level. It is epic, it is fantastical, it is disturbing. A darkness festers within, and there

will be many surprises along the way...

An addendum:

Every now and then I'll see the odd fan wax lyrical about the grand old days of Big Finish, and how they're Not As Good As They Used To Be. And hey, I'm not immune to that kind of nostalgia. I love Ye Olde Big Finish. I've talked before of what the early Monthly Range meant to me.

But honestly, I do not believe there's ever been a project quite like this. The concept for this series is the most radical Big Finish has ever been. *I would love you to support it.* If you want to see more creative risks like this, more opportunities for writers to big and go bold - please support DARK GALLIFREY and all who sail in her. I may be taking a break from the Whoniverse, but selfishly, as a listener, these are the kinds of stories I want to hear.

So, you can commit to all four years if you fancy. Or you can simply enjoy each trilogy as and when they come. But get on board. This ancient Gallifreyan ship is taking off...

An additional addendum:

Yes it's finally Morbin' time

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Jaime Sandoval Mar 5, 2024

Liked by Tim Foley

beyond excited for this series! bring on the weird experimental stuff! 🔥

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Thomas Halouva Apr 4, 2024

Super excited for this! How did you get started writing for Big Finish?

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1 reply by Tim Foley

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